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THE DEAD PECOS TOWN

Above the steep arroyo of russet running straight with rose
The Pecos pueblo sleeps—
A mound of dust timbered with bones.
Three silver yuccas flower on the grave.
For headstone, cut by frost and all its edges shriveled by
the desert heat,
A mission leans against the wide still sky.
I too am watching with time.
Where I stand, the crusted gravel cracks
And ghosts of seven centuries are stirred.
Shards of painted pots lie like mosaic on a shattered floor.
A frost-white shin-bone rattles down the slope,
Strikes a fellow and finds the plain.
Jaws are set and dead mouths smile—
Bones of martyrs, pioneers.
Feet that once were dancing lie with rain gods,
And thin broken spears.

Kate Buss